

## A Fulfilled Christian Life, Part 9 - Romans 12:12 – February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013

- Today's teaching will be part nine of a series titled; "A Fulfilled Christian Life."
- For the benefit of those who weren't with us last week, we only got to the first part of verse twelve, and today, we will finish the entire verse.
- While it may seem we're spending a lot of time on these short sentence verses in the remainder of the chapter, we do so for good reasons.

- Chief amongst them being that there is so much in the way of practical, nuts and bolts application to our Christian lives in this fallen world.
- So much so, that just in this verse we're already seeing how it can single handedly be a game changer in that it can literally change my life.
- Not only can my life be changed my life can be fulfilled joy filled and it's evidenced by the first one we looked at in the first part of the verse.

### 1. Joy in Hope (Verse 12a)

- Here Paul writes that we can be joyful in hope, in the sense that the joy of our salvation comes packaged with the hope of our redemption.

### 2. Perseverance in Affliction (Verse 12b)

(12b) patient in affliction...

- Here in the second part of verse twelve, Paul says that we are to be patient in affliction. Perhaps better said, be persevering in affliction.
- This because, as one commentator puts it, patience does not denote a passive putting up with things, but an active, steadfast endurance.
- In other words, in affliction, we can proactively, and steadfastly persevere with patience, and endurance that comes in the midst of a trial.

- It's interesting to note, the word the Apostle Paul uses for affliction carries with it the idea of a crushing pressure from an enormous weight.
- The reason being is in that day they'd have understood this by virtue of how they'd place a board on a man's chest, so as to torture him.
- The way it worked is that they would put a heavy stone on the board so that every time he took a breath, he would be unable to breath in.

- I'm of the belief that Paul is describing those afflictions in the life of a believer that crush us, and torture us, and leave us sort of breathless.
- This begs the question of how it can even be possible for us to persevere in the face of such a crushing and torturing trial and affliction.
- Thankfully, God's Word is not silent when it comes to the "how" behind the "what" of this kind of perseverance. Consider James 2:2-12.

**James 1:2-12 NIV** Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, (3) because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. (4) Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (5) If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. (6) But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. (7) That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; (8) he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. (9) The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. (10) But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower. (11) For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business. (12) Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

### 3. Persistence in Prayer (Verse 12c)

(12c) faithful in prayer.

- Paul now sort of wraps the bow around this magnificent verse saying we can be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and persistent in prayer.
- By that I mean, when I'm joyful in hope, so too will I also be patient in affliction, and if I'm patient in affliction, I'll also be persistent in prayer.
- Here's how I get there, when I have the joy of my salvation in the hope for future redemption I develop perseverance in my present trials.

- Then, when I develop perseverance in my trials, I will also develop persistence in prayer, which comes because I'm being joyful in hope.
- The truth of the matter is that all three work in concert, one with the other, and as such you won't develop any of them, without all of them.
- I'll take it one step further and suggest the degree in which I possess one of the three will be proportionate to how much I possess all three.

**Luke 18:1-8 NKJV** Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, (2) saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. (3) Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' (4) And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, (5) yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' " (6) Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. (7) And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? (8) I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

- Perhaps you'll indulge me in closing as I attempt to compare this widow, whom I see as the poster child of verse twelve, with us in our life.
- First, notice that the purpose of the parable was to teach them, "that men always ought to pray and not lose heart." This is the first one.
- The reason I point this out is that, we, like this widow, are prone to lose heart, which is why we ought to always be persistent in prayer.

- It's important to understand that this widow, in that culture, could have never "hoped" to be the recipient of justice by virtue of who she was.
- First, as a women, she didn't stand a chance of even having her case heard by any judge because women were held in such low regard.
- Another reason she could've easily lost heart and given up hope is that this judge, with whom she is so persistent, isn't even a just judge.

- This is precisely the point of the parable, if a widow's persistence results in justice from an unjust judge, how much more for us as a bride?
- If a widow, who would arguably have no hope because of who she was, could persevere in her affliction, how much more for us as a bride?
- If a widow, whose situation was unspeakably difficult, could still be joyful in hope, then how much more can we be joyful in hope as a bride?